

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 18505 241301Z

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-12 DOE-12 SOE-01
OES-07 INRE-00 SSO-00 HA-05 SSM-03 /111 W
-----010540 241311Z /40

O R 241200Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6002

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NY

USMISSION USNATO

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 18505

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, SOPN, UR, US

SUBJ: BREZHNEV REPLIES TO PRAVDA QUESTIONS: NEW PROPOSAL ON N-BOMB

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 18505 241301Z

1. BREZHNEV'S REPLIES TO QUESTIONS POSED BY AN UNNAMED PRAVDA
CORRESPONDENT DEC. 24 PROVIDE A CONVENIENT CHECKLIST OF THE MAIN
CONCERNS OF THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP AT YEAR'S END. WITH THE
EXCEPTION OF HIS REMARKS ON THE NEUTRON BOMB AND A REFERENCE TO
HIS LONG-POSTPONED BONN TRIP HIS STATEMENTS CLOSELY FOLLOW
WELL-MARKED LINES ALREADY ENUNCIATED BY HIMSELF AND OTHER
LESSER SPOKESMEN IN RECENT WEEKS AND MONTHS. ASSUMING

DEPARTMENT HAS TASS OR FBIS TEXT OF THIS SHORT ARTICLE, WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

2. NEUTRON BOMB: BREZHNEV ANNOUNCED A "PROPOSAL TO THE WESTERN POWERS" TO REACH AGREEMENT WITH THE SOVIET UNION "ON A MUTUAL RENUNCIATION OF THE PRODUCTION OF THE NEUTRON BOMB SO AS TO SAVE THE WORLD FROM THE APPEARANCE OF THIS NEW WEAPON OF MASSIVE ANNIHILATION". HIS PROPOSAL IS A LOGICAL STEP FOLLOWING THE RECENT SOVIET CAMPAIGN AGAINST ITS PRODUCTION, AND PARTICULARLY ITS DEPLOYMENT IN EUROPE. RECENT SOVIET PRESS AND OFFICIAL PRIVATE STATEMENTS HAVE MADE THE POINT-- AND BREZHNEV CLEARLY IMPLIES IT - THAT THE SOVIETS CAN AND WILL PRODUCE THE WEAPON IF IT IS "DEVELOPED IN THE WEST, DEVELOPED AGAINST US." BREZHNEV'S CONCERN OVER THE BOMB IS FOCUSED ON THE CONCERN THAT "THIS INHUMAN WEAPON" RISKS ERASING "THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN CONVENTIONAL AND NUCLEAR ARMS, TO MAKE THE TRANSITION TO A NUCLEAR WAR OUTWARDLY, SO TO SAY, UNNOTICEABLE." IN MILITARY TERMS THE SOVIETS ARE COMMITTED TO A HIGH NUCLEAR THRESHOLD, AND ANYTHING WHICH WOULD TEND TO BLUR THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN CONVENTIONAL AND NUCLEAR WAR, PARTICULARLY IN EUROPE, HAS FOR YEARS BEEN ANATHEMA TO THEM. THE PROPOSAL IS PUT IN SUCH A WAY AS TO COUNTER ANY ATTEMPTS BY THE WEST TO SUGGEST, AS SOME PRESS REPORTS HAVE, THAT WESTERN PRODUCTION AND DEPLOYMENT MIGHT BE TRADED FOR SOME ADDITIONAL CONCESSIONS BY THE EAST IN MBFR. IT APPEARS TO US AT FIRST GLANCE THAT THIS IDEA OF A "TRADE" -- WHICH SHOWED IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 18505 241301Z

SOVIET PRESS SOME WEEKS AGO - MAY HAVE BEEN ONE OF PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR BREZHNEV'S PROPOSAL AT THIS TIME.

3. VISIT TO FRG: BREZHNEV'S REFERENCE TO HIS "FORTHCOMING VISIT TO THE FRG, IN THE NEAR FUTURE", SERVES TO MOVE THIS LONG-DELAYED TRIP BACK INTO THE FOREFRONT OF SOVIET-FRG PROBLEMS. IT HAS NEVER BEEN FAR FROM THE FRONT RANK, BUT LOWER LEVEL OFFICIALS IN THE MFA HAD BEEN INDICATING LATELY TO THE FRG EMBASSY HERE THAT THE QUESTION OF THE RIGHT TIME FOR THE TRIP WAS STILL UNRESOLVED. WE KNOW OF NOTHING IN SOVIET-SFRG RELATIONS WHICH MIGHT BE PRESSING THE SOVIETS TO MAKE THE VISIT IN THE NEAR FUTURE, EXCEPT THE TALK ABOUT A MEETING OF SCHMIDT AND HONECKER. IT IS LIKELY THAT THE SOVIETS ARE, AS HAS BEEN SUGGESTED, DETERMINED THAT BREZHNEV WILL GO TO BONN BEFORE SCHMIDT GOES TO EAST GERMANY. IF THIS IS THE CASE, THE ANNOUNCEMENT IN BREZHNEV'S REPLIES SUGGESTS THAT THE SOVIETS VIEW A SCHMIDT-HONNECKER MEETING SOON AS A REAL POSSIBILITY AND THAT THEY WISH TO PUT BOTH SIDES ON NOTICE THAT THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S VISIT MUST TAKE PRECEDENCE. PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, IS FACT THAT MENTION OF BREZHNEV VISIT TO FRG AND DISCUSSION OF NEUTRON BOMB IN SAME SHORT INTERVIEW DRAWS ATTENTION TO THE INTERRELATION OF THE TWO QUESTIONS. BREZHNEV DOES NOT STATE THAT FRG

ACCEPTANCE OF NEUTRON BOMB WOULD RUIN OR MAKE HIS VISIT TO BONN IMPOSSIBLE. HOWEVER, IN LIGHT OF RECENT PRIVATE COMMENTS (SUCH AS BONDARENKO'S TO FRG MILATT VOGEL - MOSCOW 18171), THERE CAN BE LITTLE DOUBT THAT THIS IS PRECISELY ONE OF THE MESSAGES THE INTERVIEW IS DESIGNED TO CONVEY.

4. DISARMAMENT: THE TREATMENT OF DISARMAMENT IN THE SPEECH WAS A COMBINATION OF HIGH SELF-PRAISE FOR SOVIET "INITIATIVES" AND CURSORY TREATMENT OF SPECIFIC ISSUES. SALT WAS VIEWED WITH SOME OPTIMISM "VERY GOOD(NEPLOKHIYE) POSSIBILITIES" FOR SUCCESS). ON CTB INTERESTINGLY, BREZHNEV USED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OUR MEMORY THE PHRASE "CESSATION OF ALL NUCLEAR TESTS" WITHOUT MAKING THE CAREFUL DISTINCTION BETWEEN WEAPONS TESTS AND PNES AND WITH NO REFERENCE TO LATTER AT ALL.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 MOSCOW 18505 241301Z

5. MIDDLE EAST: BREZHNEV'S REPLIES TO QUESTIONS POSED BY PRAVDA ON THE MIDDLE EAST CONTAINS NOTHING NEW BUT IS THE MOST FORCEFUL AND OF COURSE AUTHORITATIVE PUBLIC STATEMENT OF THE SOVIET POSITION EXPRESSED SINCE SADAT'S VISIT TO ISRAEL. IT CONFIRMS, IF INDEED ANY CONFIRMATION NEEDED, SOVIET OPPOSITION TOWARDS THE SADAT/CAIRO PROCESS WHICH IS CHARACTERIZED AS "NEGATIVE" AND AS MAKING THE CONVOCAION OF THE GENEVA MEPC "MORE DIFFICULT". HE REPEATS THE STANDARD SOVIET FOUR PRINCIPLES ON WHICH A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT MUST BE REACHED: WITHDRAWAL, PALESTINEAN RIGHTS (INCLUDING PALESTINIAN STATE), SECURITY OF ALL STATES, AND ENDING THE STATE OF WAR. IN BRIEF, BREZHNEV'S STATEMENT CONFIRMS PUBLICLY THE POSITION TAKEN PRIVATELY BY GROMYKO AND OTHERS IN RECENT WEEKS: THAT SADAT'S INITIATIVES HAVE COMPLICATED RATHER THAN FACILITATED AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT.
TOON

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NUCLEAR BOMBS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 24-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MOSCOW18505
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770481-0307
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771219/aaaaaoyq.tel
Line Count: 152
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f16e0efd-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 132126
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BREZHNEV REPLIES TO PRAVDA QUESTIONS: NEW PROPOSAL ON N-BOMB CONFIDENTIAL CONFIDENTIAL
TAGS: PARM, SOPN, UR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f16e0efd-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009